(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Doordarshan has the unique distinction of being the only terrestrial-cum-satellite broadcaster having the largest reach in the country and its popularity can be gauged by the trust reposed on it.

(c) and (d) Doordarshan run by Prasar Bharati has been discharging its duties as a public broadcaster and has not been guided only by commercial considerations. The programming has essentially been dictated by the statutory duties entrusted to it and cannot be run only on commercial line to compete with private channels. Recognising the need for further reforms, a Group of Ministers has been constituted by the Government to give its recommendations on a number of issues including capital restructuring of Prasar Bharati, issues related to status of employees etc. GOM has held 4 meetings till now.

High price for paid channels

1779. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the rates per channel fixed in our neighbouring countries and countries in the SAARC, region for payment by the consumers;

(b) whether the rate of Rs. 5/- per channel fixed by TRAI is not based on any cost based pricing exercise and is exorbitant;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether any study has been conducted by TRAI in neighbouring/SAARC countries on fixation of rates; and

(f) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) No authentic information is available with the Government.

(b) to (d) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has considered the following while fixing a ceiling of Rs. 5/- per channel per subscriber for Conditional Access System (CAS) notified areas of Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai:

(i) The prices made available by the stakeholders during the process of consultation;

(ii) Inference drawn from the agreements between the broadcasters and the Multi System Operator;

(iii) Available data from CAS areas in Chennai;

(iv) Offers made by Direct to Home operator. The determination, methodology adopted by TDSAT in its judgement in the case involving ASC Enterprises Limited and Star India Pvt. Ltd.

(v) Reported mismatch between the actual subscriber and chargeable subscriber (inference drawn from the prevailing practices).

(vi) Arrangement of revenue sharing with a reference to advertisement, carriage and revenue generated from the subscribers.

Further, the market survey commissioned in 2004 by the Authority reveals that generally subscribers do not watch more than 15-20 channels including Free to Air channels. Thus, if a subscriber opts for 10 pay channels then together with 30 free to air channels totaling 40 channels, his cable bill will be Rs.127/-, excluding taxes and set top box instalments (Rs. 77/- for Basic service tier comprising of 30 free to air channels and Rs. 50/- for 10 pay channels). Cable bill of Rs. 127/- (excluding taxes and set top box instalment) as the price for 40 channels, can not be said to be exorbitant.

(e) TRAI has intimated that no such study has been undertaken.

(f) Does not arise.

Priority to regional language producers under self-finance scheme

1780. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the regional language producers are not getting due priority under the Ministry's self-finance scheme for TV serials;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to rectify this anomaly?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHR PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati have informed that the Self Finance Scheme (SFC) has been started in DD-1 National channel and DD Sahyadri channel on an experimental basis.

(c) Prasar Bharati have informed that all marketing Divisions have been asked to explore the marketing viability of SFC scheme in all Regional channels after the success of the scheme in DD-1 National and DD-Sahyadri.

Flexible labour policy for attracting FDI

1781. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government agrees with the view of Government of Gujarat that present labour policy is major hurdle in attracting Foreign Direct Investment;

(b) whether it is a fact that any proposal from Government of Gujarat for flexible labour policy has been received;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether Central Government is in favour of such relaxations?